

PIONEER MEMORIAL

During the past year this column has carried in it from time to time a series of articles entitled "Architecture Destroyed". Twenty such stories have appeared which have depicted architecturally significant buildings that no longer stand. Today however, I thought it might be of interest to you to see something rather significant that was never built at all. The illustration contained here is a fine water color rendering, the original of which measures 36x56 inches. In the upper lefthand corner the following information is given: Original Design Orleans County, New York Pioneer Memorial E.M. Viquesney Monumental Architect & Designer Marretta - Ga. The lower right hand corner contains the designer's signature E.M. Viquesney 1911. Because of the quality of this rendering and the fact it was done by a professional suggests that somebody or some group invested some money at least in the idea.

Here now is the story behind this memorial which was never erected. The Orleans County Pioneer Association was established in June 1859. It consisted of early settlers of Orleans County and others who were interested in our early history and was in essence, the first historical society in the county, which continued until the time of the second World War. The Pioneer Association was one which was dedicated to the heroic work done by the men and women who were the first settlers of this county. We can surmise that the idea of a monument to the early pioneers was one which was discussed over a period of many years. However, it wasn't until 1911 that any serious work regarding this took place. At a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors on April 18, 1911 Mr. John Bidleman, President of the Orleans County Pioneer Association addressed the Board in relation to erecting such a monument upon the Court House Square. The Board granted the association the right to erect such a monument and appointed supervisors Bamber, Brown and Daum to act as a committee with Pres. Bidleman to locate a specific site. By May 1911 a spot had been selected which was directly southwest of the county clerk's office making it come in front of, or across the street from the Universalist church. This area has now been consumed by the county parking lot. It was estimated that such a monument would cost around \$5,000 to erect. It was to have been made of granite with four life-size cast figures of pioneers around the base. The total height of the monument would have been approximately fifty feet. It was reported in 1912 that the committee for this project would commence soon to raise funds in every township of the county for the monument. By 1914 the project so to speak was still not off the ground. What happened? We can assume without other references to the memorial that it simply died in committee without enough financial or enthusiastic support.

"It is hard to fail; but it is worse never to have tried to succeed..."

-Theodore Roosevelt

